

in the region involving two North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies, Greece and Turkey, which would threaten vital United States interests in the already volatile Eastern Mediterranean area and beyond;

Whereas a peaceful, just, and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem would greatly benefit the security, and the political, economic, and social well-being of all Cypriots, as well as contribute to improved relations between Greece and Turkey;

Whereas a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem would also strengthen peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean and serve important interests of the United States;

Whereas the United Nations has repeatedly stated the parameters for such a solution, most recently in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1092, adopted on December 23, 1996, with United States support;

Whereas the prospect of the accession by Cyprus to the European Union, which the United States has actively supported, could serve as a catalyst for a solution to the Cyprus problem;

Whereas President Bill Clinton has pledged that in 1997 the United States will "play a heightened role in promoting a resolution in Cyprus"; and

Whereas United States leadership will be a crucial factor in achieving a solution to the Cyprus problem, and increased United States involvement in the search for this solution will contribute to a reduction of tensions on Cyprus; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) reaffirms its view that the status quo on Cyprus is unacceptable and detrimental to the interests of the United States in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond;

(2) considers lasting peace and stability on Cyprus could be best served by a process of complete demilitarization leading to the withdrawal of all foreign occupation forces, the cessation of foreign arms transfers to Cyprus, and providing for alternative internationally acceptable and effective security arrangements as negotiated by the parties;

(3) welcomes and supports the commitment by President Clinton to give increased attention to Cyprus and make the search for a solution a priority of United States foreign policy;

(4) encourages the President to launch an early substantive initiative, in close coordination with the United Nations, the European Union, and interested governments to promote a speedy resolution of the Cyprus problem on the basis of international law, the provisions of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, democratic principles, including respect for human rights, and in accordance with the norms and requirements for accession to the European Union;

(5) calls upon the parties to lend their full support and cooperation to such an initiative; and

(6) requests the President to report actions taken to give effect to the objectives set forth in paragraph (4) in the bimonthly report on Cyprus transmitted to the Congress.

CHILDREN

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 1997

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I am inserting my Washington Report for Wednesday, May 21, 1997 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

President Clinton recently hosted the White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning. The purpose was to bring together parents, scientists, policy makers, child care providers and others to discuss the new research on brain development in children under age 3 and to explore how to deliver this information to more homes. The key lesson from this research is that our ability to interact with others, communicate, and learn is largely dependent on what happens to us as newborns and toddlers.

Now more than ever we know the importance of early intervention, from prenatal care to preschool, to ensure that children get off to a healthy start. Research shows that the stimulation children receive after birth counts even more than genetics to enable them to become smart and adaptable. Unfortunately, there remains a huge gap between our knowledge about children's needs and our success in meeting them. We simply must find effective ways to apply new scientific knowledge to public policy. Deprivation, abuse, and neglect of children often has long-lasting, damaging effects not only on them, but on our entire nation.

NEW DISCOVERIES

Fifteen years ago researchers thought that a baby's brain structure was virtually complete at birth, as if the brain were a computer just waiting to be turned on. Now we know that humans come into the world with a brain that is largely incomplete. Just as a sculptor shapes a lump of clay into a distinct work of art, our experiences mold our brain.

Giving children the stimulation they need to learn and grow doesn't require fancy toys or classes. Research shows instead that simple things can have the greatest positive impact. For example, talking, singing, and reading to children from birth onward helps develop the parts of their brains devoted to language. In addition, holding babies and responding to their cues enables them to feel secure, which helps them learn and grow. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. The brains of children who are abused or neglected release high levels of stress hormones, which can actually hinder the brain's growth and development.

PERSISTENT PROBLEMS

Most parents work very hard to meet their children's needs. As a nation, though, we fail our youngest citizens far too often. The U.S. has the highest rate of young children living in poverty of any western industrialized nation. The child poverty rate has hovered at around 20% ever since 1981. Other trends are even worse. In 1995, nearly one million children were victims of abuse or neglect. Fourteen percent of children lacked health insurance, 25% lacked immunizations against preventable childhood diseases. Between 1985 and 1994, the percentage of low-birth-weight babies, who often have multiple health problems, grew. And while the infant mortality rate has improved, the U.S. still ranks 18th among industrialized nations. During this same period, the number of teens dying from accidents, homicides, and suicides rose 10%. Arrests of juveniles for violent crimes increased by a staggering 70% nationwide, 125% in Indiana. And while the teen pregnancy rate has leveled off in recent years, about half a million children are born to teen mothers each year.

Although most mothers of children under 4 work outside the home, high-quality, affordable child care remains in short supply. The federal government's Head Start program is widely acclaimed, but it is available only to those age 3 and above, and serves only about

a third of eligible children. A new program for younger children, Early Head Start, has only 22,000 slots for 2.9 million eligible children.

PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

At the White House Conference, President Clinton announced a number of worthy initiatives. First, he directed the Department of Defense, which runs many high-quality child care centers, to share its formula for success with state and local governments and private child care centers. Second, the President proposed a plan to extend health care coverage to an additional 5 million uninsured children. The balanced budget agreement recently announced includes funding to extend health insurance to some unserved children.

Third, the President wants to expand Early Head Start enrollment by one-third next year. Fourth, the U.S. Department of Education is making available early childhood development activity kits to anyone who calls 1-800-USA-LEARN to request one. Fifth, the Department of Justice is establishing a "Safe Start" program to help law enforcement officers respond more sensitively to children who are the victims of or witnesses to violence. The President also supports expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act to cover events like parent-teacher conferences.

CONCLUSION

Parenting can be vastly rewarding, but also demands enormous amounts of time, energy, patience and skill. Children require not just caretakers, but caregivers. Even under the best circumstances, the task of parenting can be overwhelming. For parents who are very young, lack education, are struggling to rise out of poverty, or who were once abused themselves, the demands occasionally are too great. The arguments for an expansion of support for new parents and for quality child care are compelling. Communities that have reached out to at-risk families with visits by social workers and nurses and free parenting classes have had promising results.

Children are persistently the poorest group in America. I worry that recent budget-cutting efforts in Congress have focused disproportionately on the poor. We have not yet seen the full effects of welfare reform, which not only included time limits on welfare benefits but also restrictions on food stamps and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for children.

Children have such an amazing capacity to grow and learn and thrive provided there is love and patience and commitment. We adults fall short of our responsibilities if we fail to provide these, and we also pay the price. We need to reach out to struggling parents, offering assistance and advice that can help them become the strong mothers and fathers most of them want to be. The very youngest Americans are the ones who will lead us in the 21st century. We cannot expect to prosper in the future if we do not help them prosper today.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PETE DARLING

HON. AMO HOUGHTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 1997

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the House to help me pay tribute to Dr. Arthur Perry "Pete" Darling, who today celebrates his 80th birthday. Pete Darling lives in Corning, NY. He came there in 1952. For the